

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Applicant's Amendments

This Office Action is responsive to the amendment filed on 7/8/08. Claims 2-20 are pending. Claim 1 has been canceled. No claims have been amended.

Applicant's arguments have been considered and are persuasive, thus the former 35 USC 102 and 35 USC 102/103 rejections have been overcome. However, upon further consideration, the instant claims are rejected under new grounds of rejections and thus claims 11, 14, and 17-20 are rejected for the reasons of record. Claims 2-10, 12, 13, 15, and 16 are objected to.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 11, 14, and 17-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Valent (US Patent No. 5,860,300).

Valent teaches a clothes washing machine having a flexible duct (gasket) for preventing leakage. Therein is a tub 10, drum 11, an upper-right sealing part 7/8 (lip) and below this is a "J" shaped part (support member). The gasket has a bending portion called circumferential folds 16 which connects the cabinet, a bending portion of

the duct, and the tub (first plane, second plane, bending portion). The upper-right sealing part 7/8 is formed uniformly about the entire inner circumference of the duct as illustrated.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2-10, 12, 13, 15, and 16 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: the closest prior art of record fails to teach or make obvious thereof the claimed gasket assembly of a washing machine comprising a gasket between a tub installed in a cabinet and a door installed at a front side of the cabinet, the gasket bringing the door watertight to prevent water from leaking outside; a lip extending radially inward from an interior side of the gasket around an inner circumference, a support member, ad a reinforcement rib formed on an inner circumference of the tub tot support an inner lateral side of the lip, inter alia. Also, the closest prior art of record fails to teach or make obvious the claimed gasket, lip, and support member wherein the support member comprises a protrusion formed on an inner lateral side of the lip to be contacted with the tub.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to RITA R. PATEL whose telephone number is (571)272-8701. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F: 9-6.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Barr can be reached on (571) 272-1414. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Michael Barr/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art
Unit 1792

/Rita R. Patel/
Examiner, Art Unit 1792

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